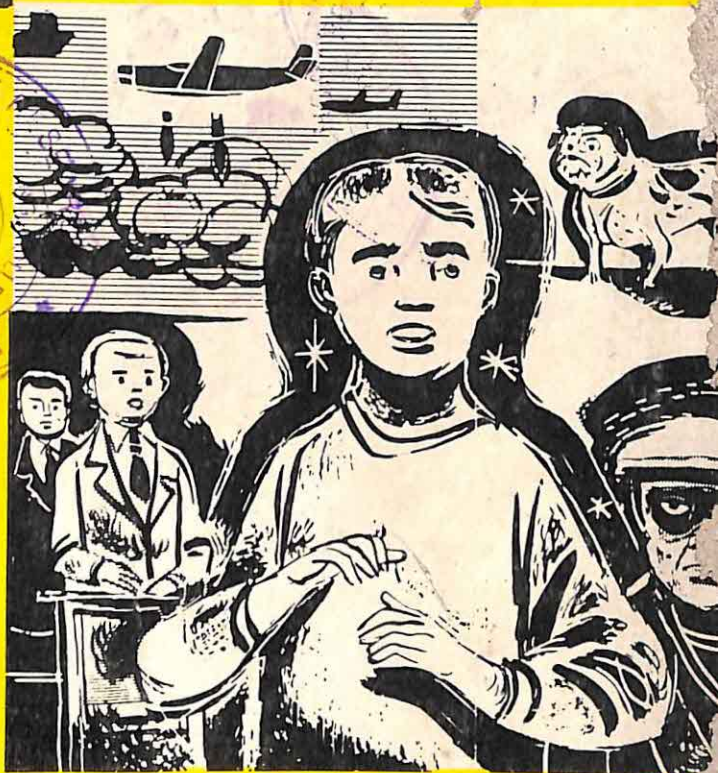


*How to
master your
fears and
anxieties*

WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF ?



*Franz Alexander, M.D
and
Francesca Alexander*

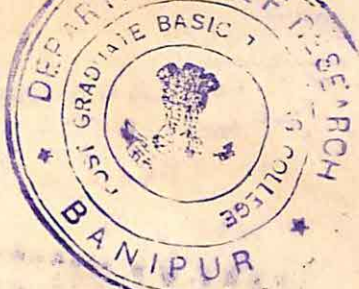


WHAT ARE

Copyright 1954 by Science Research Associates, Inc. Copyright under the International Copyright Union. Printed in U.S.A. All rights reserved.

SCIENCE RESEARCH ASSOCIATES, INC.
57 WEST GRAND AVENUE, CHICAGO 10, ILLINOIS

7144



YOU AFRAID OF ?

Franz Alexander, M.D.
Director of the Institute for Psychoanalysis in Chicago

SIE/94/70

Francesca Alexander, M.A.

Illustrated by Joseph Teresi
Series editor: Barbara Jipson



CONTENTS

1 EVERYONE IS AFRAID	2
2 HOW WE LEARN TO BE AFRAID	7
3 WHAT'S BACK OF IT?	12
4 WHEN FEAR AND ANXIETY RUN WILD	30
5 HOW TO HANDLE FEAR AND ANXIETY	37
6 CAN WE ESCAPE FEAR ALTOGETHER?	45



Manjrayan

12.5.05
11274

EVERYONE IS AFRAID

So you were frightened yesterday on the football field when you saw the ball hurtling through space at you—frightened that you might not catch the ball or frightened that you would catch it and then be tackled. Maybe you were also scared that you wouldn't "make good" in front of all those people.

We've all had the feeling of our hands getting wet, of not being able to catch our breath, and of that sickening, churning sensation in our stomachs. Yes, that's being scared. It's a feeling that everybody knows.

What fear does

We are all afraid at times, and it's a good thing we are. This feeling of fear keeps us out of serious danger many times every day. It makes us look both ways when we cross busy streets; it makes us look for some protection when we see an angry dog charging down at us. It keeps us from taking unnecessary chances with our safety. The girl who doesn't know how to swim is frightened or uneasy when she goes out in a canoe. This feeling of fear may cause her to take sensible precautions, such as making sure there is a life preserver in the canoe or at least knowing that the other people in the canoe are good swimmers who could help her if the canoe capsized.

We are frightened when we know there is danger at hand, and this fright helps us make preparations so that we can escape from danger. *Fear acts like an alarm signal telling us to be careful.*

Physical reactions to fear

But fear also helps us in another way. It helped yesterday on the football field. The fear of not catching the ball allowed your body to

prepare itself to meet the oncoming emergency. Our bodies undergo many physical changes when the alarm signal of fear starts. The functions of digesting food and of storing reserve material are slowed down so that your body can send a larger supply of blood to those parts which are going to be under greater stress. For instance, more blood is sent to your arms and legs so that you can fight better or run more quickly. Your breathing and heartbeat increase so that you've got more fuel for these actions.

These physical changes can be compared to those changes which occur when a nation goes to war. Industries which produce guns and planes are given priorities; those producing products nonessential to the war effort are limited in their use of vital raw materials. Most of the country's energies and resources are directed to handling the national emergency. Similarly, in a personal emergency, fear causes most of your energy to be concentrated on escaping from an angry dog, dodging a car, or catching a football and making a touchdown.

What is fear?

Fear, then, is a realization that danger is close at hand. It helps us take necessary precautions and gives a signal to our bodies to make physical preparations to meet the emergency. Fear is a reaction which helps us handle an emergency.



Fear will cause your energies to be concentrated on escaping from danger.

7144

The dangers which cause us to feel fear are dangers in the world outside ourselves—dangers like an angry dog or a rough tackler.

Anxiety and danger within

However, we shall see that not all dangers come from the outside world. Within himself, a person may have desires and impulses which, if carried into action, might have dangerous consequences.

Suppose you find that someone has left his watch on the sink in the locker room. You feel an impulse to pick it up, put it in your pocket, and keep it. This impulse is dangerous. Someone might catch you and accuse you of being a thief. Even if someone didn't catch you, your conscience would make you suffer and feel guilty.



Anxiety will warn against taking something which doesn't belong to you.

You are warned that this impulse is dangerous through an emotion which feels like fear, but because this emotion warns you of a danger inside yourself we call it *anxiety* in order to distinguish it from *fear* which warns of outside dangers.

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is similar to fear. Both are reactions to danger. Fear is our reaction to dangers outside ourselves. Anxiety is a reaction to dangers which arise within ourselves. Very often anxiety has all the physical

symptoms that we associate with fear: wet and shaking hands, not being able to catch our breath, and a sickening sensation in our stomachs. In other words, anxiety feels similar to fear, and it results in similar physical symptoms—but *its cause is different*.

Fear and anxiety may occur at the same time

Both fear and anxiety may have played a part in that scared feeling you had about not catching the football. We have already seen that there was fear of physical danger from the outside world—that tackle was a big, rough bruiser who could really knock all of the wind out of you.

Where does the anxiety come in? Suppose you took one look at that tackle and your strongest desire was to keep him from injuring you. You had an impulse to do this by fumbling and not catching the ball. That was one way to avoid the danger of injury.

But anxiety told you there was also danger in this impulse of yours to fumble. If you followed it and muffed the catch, you were in danger of feeling ashamed and humiliated at your own cowardice. In other words, you were afraid of the self-reproach you would feel if you gave in to the impulse. You felt anxiety.

Fear and anxiety can be helpful

Both the fear and the anxiety you felt in this instance may have helped you in making that catch and outrunning that tackle. Because anxiety had warned you of the danger of shame and humiliation which would come if you muffed the catch, you were alert and ready to receive the ball and start running. Because fear prepared you to face the danger of the injury that big tackle could inflict, your body and mind were ready to do everything in their power to avoid that danger. Your body had received the alarm signals of fear and anxiety and had prepared itself to work with the greatest possible efficiency.

Fear and anxiety are necessary

Both fear and anxiety are natural reactions which have been set up in our bodies to warn us of some danger. If a car is speeding towards us, we become frightened, and this very fear will help us get out of the way of danger. If we find ourselves in a situation where our own impulses may lead us into danger, we will become anxious, and this anxiety will help us through the difficult situation. No one should be ashamed of having feelings of fear and anxiety—they are as necessary and natural

to us as the feelings of thirst or hunger. All these feelings are simply our bodies' ways of telling us what we need to know—to get a drink of water or to get out of danger.

When they cause trouble

Despite the fact that they are fundamentally helpful reactions to danger, fear and anxiety sometimes don't seem helpful at all. At such times, they seem only to make us uncomfortable and keep us from acting in ways we would like to act.

When this happens, it is often for one of the following reasons:

- We have learned to be frightened of something which is not really dangerous.
- We are not sure what is the real cause of our feeling anxiety or fear.

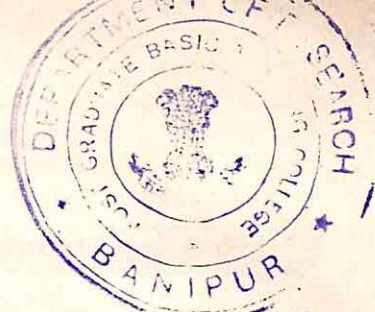
Michelle's mother and father came from France, and when Michelle started to school she spoke English with an accent. Some of the boys and girls made fun of her when she spoke in class. Later, Michelle learned to speak English better, and her classmates grew old enough to be more understanding, but Michelle still feels she may be laughed at and is afraid to recite even though there is no real danger.

Martin has a pleasant speaking voice and is very bright, but he gets anxious whenever he is to make a speech in class. This keeps him from doing his best and makes Martin unhappy. Martin thinks he's afraid of having to face an audience. He doesn't realize that each time he speaks to a group, he is really fearful of not doing as well as his sister who was good enough to win a dramatic award at the state university.

It happens to the best of us

In all of our lives there are instances when, for one reason or another, fear and anxiety do not act in the helpful manner we described before. Unlike thirst and hunger, fear and anxiety are sometimes not easily understood.

The purpose of this book is to teach us to understand and handle our fears and anxieties in such a way that they may help us and not hold us back. In it, we will discover how we learned to be afraid. We will discuss those things which are most apt to make teen-agers upset and anxious. We will learn how to understand and handle our fears so that they will be the most help and the least hindrance possible.



HOW WE LEARN TO BE AFRAID

Have you ever watched a few-months-old baby's reaction to a loud and unexpected noise? His eyes will blink. His head will jerk forward. He will draw his arms and legs in toward himself. His expression will make you feel that what the baby is experiencing is unpleasant, and he's likely to cry. All babies more than a few months of age have this reaction without its being taught to them. It is an inherited physical alarm signal which is the basis of all those later reactions we call fear.

Despite the fact a baby has this reaction, he does not fear many things we know to be dangerous. We know that if someone pointed a loaded gun at a baby, the baby wouldn't know enough to be afraid. Why? Because he hasn't learned that the gun is dangerous and can cause pain.

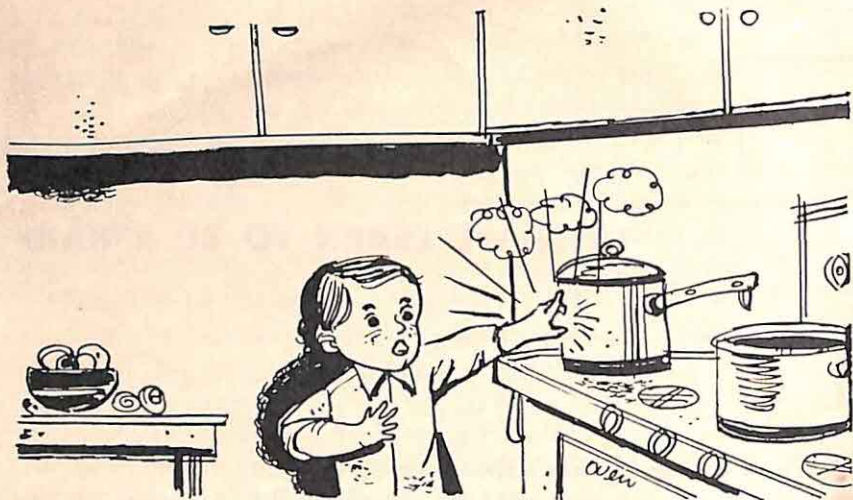
Whatever we fear, we have learned to fear. Whatever we feel anxiety about we have learned to feel anxiety about in the process of growing up.

How do we learn fear?

How do we learn to be afraid of something? We learn to be afraid of an object or a situation through our experience with it.

Suppose you were a little child and that you had had no experience with hot pans. No one had told you that a hot pan could burn you. Would you be afraid of the pan? The answer is "no." But if you had touched the pan when it was hot and had blistered a finger, you would probably be pretty careful about hot pans in the future. Your experience would have taught you they were dangerous and could cause pain. Through experience you would have learned to be afraid of touching a hot pan.

Or suppose you never actually touched the hot pan, but every time you came near the stove where it sat, your mother would say, "No, no musn't touch. It will hurt you." You already knew what "hurt" meant from



A young child may learn to fear hot pans by burning his finger on one.

falling down on the sidewalk. You didn't like the feeling. Your mother said that if you touched the pan you'd have that feeling. You loved and trusted your mother. You felt she wouldn't fool you, and so you took her word that the hot pan was dangerous and worth being afraid of. So, you learned to fear the hot pan without having any experience with it yourself. You took someone else's word that it was dangerous.

So, you see that it is possible to learn to fear an object either because you have found from personal experience that it can cause pain or because you have heard from someone you trust that this is so.

Sometimes there isn't real danger

The three-year-old who has just blistered his finger on a hot pan, may come to feel that any pan, whether it's hot or not, is dangerous and will burn him. Little children may have great difficulty seeing the difference between situations which are really dangerous and worth being afraid of and situations which have some similarities to the dangerous situation but which are really quite safe. Sometimes they also have trouble in understanding what part of a situation has caused them to feel pain.

Eighteen-month-old Jerry fell and cut his head so badly that he had to be brought to the doctor's office so that stitches could be taken. In Jerry's young mind, it seemed to be the doctor who had caused the pain, and thereafter he was afraid to visit the doctor. Besides, one thing about the frightening and painful situation which stood out in Jerry's young mind was the doctor's white coat. Later, when he went to the barber's, he

became frightened and began to cry the minute he saw the barber's white coat. The similarity in the way the doctor and the barber dressed made Jerry feel that what happened to him in the barbershop would be as painful as the experiences which brought him to the doctor's office. So he was afraid of the barber. Because of the similarity, his fear had spread from a painful situation and extended so that he was also fearful in situations which were similar but quite safe.

Another problem with fear

As they grow older, boys and girls become more able to tell the difference between similar dangerous and safe situations, but most of us have some trouble with our fears for another reason.

You see, our first experiences with any new activity or thing color our feelings about future experiences with that activity or thing. The first time John went skiing he fell and broke his leg. As a result, he was afraid to go skiing for a long time after that, even though his better judgment told him it was unlikely he would have such a bad fall again.

Anxiety is learned, too

Just as we have learned from experience to be afraid of some objects and situations in the outside world, we also have learned from experience to be anxious about some of the impulses inside ourselves.

When Carol was six, she had an illness which made it important that she should not eat candy. But Carol liked candy and was too young to understand why she must not eat it. To keep her from sneaking into the kitchen and taking candy, her parents sometimes punished her or scolded her. This made Carol feel unloved. Little children are helpless and depend upon their parents to supply all their needs for food and everything else. It frightens them to feel unloved. Carol was no exception.

As time went by, whenever Carol even felt the temptation to steal candy, she would become anxious, for she felt that if she took the candy and her family discovered it, they would scold her and not love her. So, Carol learned to feel that the impulse to sneak candy was a dangerous one because it might cause her to lose her parents' love. Because the impulse seemed dangerous to her, she felt anxious whenever it occurred.

Repression and how it works

The story of how our anxieties develop is a little more complicated than the story of how fears develop, however.

Little children find it very difficult to want to do something and then not do it. If they have an impulse, it's hard not to act on it. This is true even when they know that what they want to do is dangerous or will cause them to be punished.

This poses a problem to the little child. He wants to do something. He feels he has to do it. If he does it, he will be punished. How can he get out of his dilemma? Most little children manage it through a mental device called *repression*—a device we continue to use all our lives. What happens is this: The little child does not recognize the dangerous impulse which may cause him to be punished. He ignores it. He does such a good job of this that he himself actually believes the impulse isn't there. Carol, for instance, might have come to feel that she didn't really want candy, that she had no urge to take it. She is not aware of her desire for candy. But deep inside her, the impulse still is there, and it has the power to frighten her because if she were to admit it existed, it might get loose and get her into trouble. Repression explains why we sometimes do not know what is causing us to be anxious.

Punishment and conscience

We have seen how Carol learned to be anxious about her impulse to eat candy because if she followed through on this impulse she would be punished. When we were young, we were like Carol. We were anxious about impulses which, if acted upon, would cause our parents to punish us.



Being punished for following their impulses causes children to fear them.

As we grow older, we are likely to be anxious about the same impulses, but our reasons for being anxious about these impulses have changed. We are no longer so afraid that our parents will punish us. We are now afraid that we will punish ourselves by making ourselves feel guilty.

Little by little in the process of our growing up, we have made our parents' *do's* and *don'ts* a part of ourselves. They have become our conscience. We no longer depend on our parents to tell us what is right and wrong. Because, as little children we depended on them for everything, we wanted deeply to please our parents. As a result, we have adopted and absorbed what our parents think is right and wrong; and their thoughts on this have become a part of us, so that *we tell ourselves* what we must and mustn't do. Even if our parents don't catch us and punish us when we do something wrong, we won't "get away" with it. For we will catch ourselves. Our consciences will punish us by making us feel guilty.

So, it is no longer just fear of being punished by our parents which causes us to be anxious about some of our impulses. We are now fearful that if we follow through on some of our wishes, we will punish ourselves. We have learned to fear our own consciences.

More about consciences

Because our consciences developed when we were very young, we did not think through the ideas of right and wrong and good and bad that went into them. We just absorbed these ideas from the adults most important to us without deciding first whether these ideas made sense. Often this process works out all right.

But sometimes boys and girls absorb ideas about right and wrong which cause them to be anxious with little reason. Geraldine's mother put tremendous emphasis on cleanliness. She scarcely let Geraldine play with other children because she said they were dirty. And she scolded Geraldine severely every time Geraldine got a spot on her clothes. Now she is older, Geraldine still feels that getting dirty is such a bad thing that she cannot enjoy hikes or any other activity where she is likely to muss her clothing. Such pastimes make her very anxious.

It's important to point out that Geraldine's mother was not trying to make things difficult. The mother's conscience also developed when she was too young to think carefully about what was going into it. She honestly felt cleanliness was so tremendously all important.

The point is that we may want to look closely at some of the things that frighten us to make sure our consciences are not causing us to feel anxious about things which aren't really dangerous or harmful.

WHAT'S BACK OF IT?

We've seen how we learn to be anxious and fearful. Now let's take a look at some of the things teen-agers are most likely to feel anxiety and fear about.

Maybe you're afraid to ask a girl for a date. Maybe tests frighten you. Maybe you're constantly fearful that you aren't making as good an impression on others as some of your friends are. Perhaps you're frightened when you think about leaving home and going to college or taking your first job. Or you may be scared to death when you have to make a speech or play a solo in the music contest.

Is it really so frightening?

A lot of different situations make teen-agers anxious and fearful when they come up against them. But why should asking a girl for a date or taking a test frighten you so? Are these things, in themselves, so frightening when you think about them objectively? Or does something else enter into the picture? Is there sometimes more to this fear business than appears on the surface?

Of course, new situations are bound to cause almost anyone a certain amount of anxiety. You never know whether you're going to be able to deal with them successfully until you've tried. And so, you may be fearful.

If you fell from your horse and broke your wrist the first time you went horseback riding, you might be fearful about trying again. Such an unfortunate past experience might conceivably even make you scared to try other similar sports, such as bike riding.

Facing completely new situations can make you fearful. So can facing situations similar to ones which haven't worked out well in the past.

Some of your fears about dating, test-taking, leaving home, being a social success and some of your fears about other things come from these causes.

Deep down

Experts in human behavior, however, have discovered that often when teen-agers feel fear regarding certain situations, there's more involved than the situation itself. Other, deeper things play a part, too.

Listed below are three important basic things which may cause teen-agers to feel anxious in situations where they otherwise might not be nearly so fearful!

- Teen-agers may be fearful of the jealousy, hostility, and competitive feelings they have toward others.
- They may be ashamed of their wishes to stay like children in some respects, to still have Mom and Dad to depend on. And they may be fearful of becoming independent adults and taking adult responsibility.
- They may be fearful of their sex drives.

It may seem pretty illogical to you that the things just listed have much to do with that queasy feeling in your stomach before you have to take a test or with your fears about not looking attractive enough to make a hit at the class party.

Human beings and ostriches

The connection is not obvious. And it's no wonder we fail to realize that these feelings cause a lot of our anxieties. A little later we will see how many of us have come to feel that some or even all of the feelings listed above are not quite nice, are bad, unpleasant, or dangerous.

We've already seen how boys and girls may hide from themselves feelings they believe are bad or dangerous. We know these hidden impulses can continue to cause anxiety. Because we are afraid to look at the real



A fear of horses could come from falling the first time you rode.

causes we tell ourselves our anxiety is due to our fear of calling a girl for a date or to our fear of flunking that final exam in French. We tell ourselves this even when our reason tells us that the girl will accept and that we've studied French hard and know it pretty well.

We'll see more about how this camouflage works as we go along, but let's look a little more closely at these deeper causes of anxiety we've mentioned and see how they can make us anxious whether they are hidden or not.

Anxiety about sex

It's easy to see that the anxious feelings you may have about going out with and getting to know members of the other sex may be caused, in part, simply by the fact that these are new experiences for you. You can probably remember, not so many years ago, when you felt that members of the other sex weren't good for much of anything. Now, you probably feel very differently.

The change often occurs rapidly. Within a few months Edith has stopped being so interested in her girls' club and has begun to notice that Paul seems to be a pretty swell fellow. A good athlete, too, and at the same time, no bully. And Paul notices that Edith is much more attractive than he really remembered her, and she certainly is smart. Awfully nice, too. She'd go out of her way to be helpful to someone.

The interest begins to shift from spending all of your time in being with members of your own sex to spending more time with members of the other sex. This change in attitude is directly related to the fact that boys and girls are growing up physically.

Although the exact time depends upon the individual, at some time during the junior high and senior high school years, our bodies mature, and we develop into physically adult men and women. A boy's shoulders widen; his voice deepens; he may sprout a beard. A girl will notice changes, too. Her breasts develop, and her whole body takes on a more womanly appearance. She begins to menstruate.

Boy friends and girl friends

As these things occur, teen-agers find that their desire to be with and to be liked by members of the other sex have increased. An entire new area of living has opened up to them, but they may find it all a little frightening without knowing exactly why.

The truth of the matter is that, although they have only recently become sexually mature, both boys and girls have had sexual feelings

and have been learning about sex for a long time. It's been found that even very young children have sexual feelings and that these become intensified when young people reach adolescence. Also, even those boys and girls whose parents have not told them the "facts of life" have learned something about sex simply by growing up as a member of a family.

The family is the schoolroom

High school boys and girls normally find their sexual feelings going out toward some member of the other sex who is about the same age as they are. We've seen that a very young child has sexual feelings, too, even though these aren't completely the same as those experienced by adults. Most of a little child's contact with people is within his own family. As a result, it's only natural that a child's sexual feelings are originally directed toward members of his family. A little child's first sexual attraction is normally toward a family member of the opposite sex. The little boy becomes attached to his mother and sisters, and the little girl forms her first attachments to men with her father and brothers.

A little boy who loves his mother will want her undivided attention. He will feel jealousy and anger when he sees that his mother showers attention on his father. But the little boy also loves his father and, therefore, feels guilty and anxious about his anger. If the child is a little girl, she will want all of her father's attention, feel angry because her mother takes some of it, and also feel guilty about her anger.

Another factor makes little children feel even more guilty. In our particular society, expressions of sexual feelings and curiosity about sex are thought to be for adults only. Many parents become openly upset when their children show an interest in sexual matters. This may make the child feel sexual interests and impulses are bad. As a result, he may become very anxious when he has these impulses toward members of his own family.

You can see, then, why sexual feelings might seem so bad and dangerous to a little child that they would make him anxious or even cause him to repress them. Often, this happens. The child may also repress the angry, jealous feelings he has felt toward the parent of the other sex.

Growing up

Even though he is unaware of these feelings, they do not actually cease to exist. They only stay hidden. When the changes which make the child a physical adult occur, sexual feelings become forceful. These more intense sex feelings often bring with them the sense of guilt and the

jealous, angry, hostile feelings which were connected with sexual feelings in childhood. These feelings may cause anxiety and fear even though they are hidden. The young person in question only feels anxious without knowing that this anxiety is connected to feelings which he is not quite aware of or able to identify and label as sex feelings, jealous feelings, or guilt feelings.

Dating days

Normally, the disturbing feelings which go along with growing up sexually decrease as the teen-ager begins to direct his feelings toward persons of his own age. These feelings no longer appear so dangerous and forbidden to him. Soon he will begin dating. A little later he may become engaged and married. A successful marriage is the final sign that the two people involved have learned well, through family experiences, to love a member of the other sex.

But getting comfortable in this new area of living takes time. Until boys and girls do become more at ease, they may find themselves feeling anxious now and then about their friendships with members of the other sex and about their sexual feelings generally.

The story of Jim

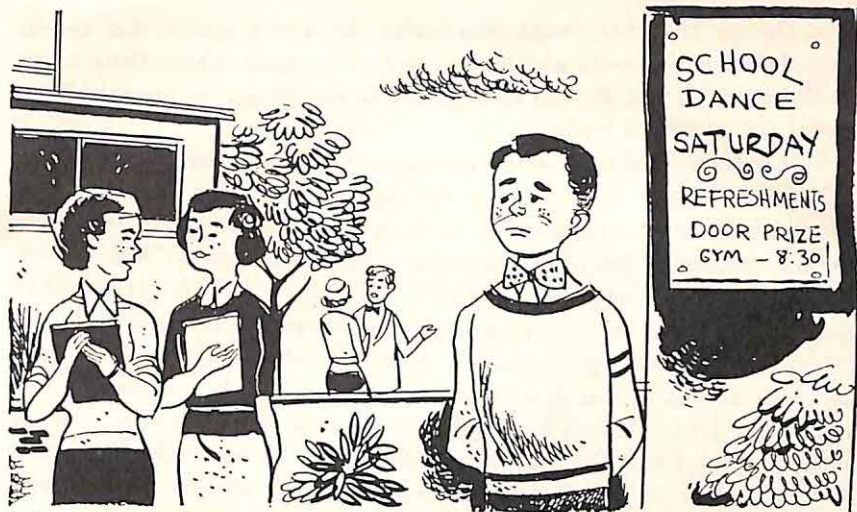
Sometimes the attitudes held by a boy's or a girl's parents make this period more difficult, even though the parents don't intend for this to be the case. That's how the situation was for Jim.

One week before the spring prom, Jim felt he could no longer put off asking some girl to go with him. His mind quickly went down the list of girls who had not yet been asked. There were only a few left. "After all," he mused, "I can't take a gal that's going to make it look as if I couldn't get anything better. It's going to have to be Betty."

The next day after school, Jim lingered outside until he saw Betty coming down the stairs. Unfortunately, she was with a crowd of girls, and he couldn't bring himself to tell her he wanted to speak to her.

That evening at supper he was quiet. He was downright scared, and he thought the reason for his fear was that Betty might refuse him. Still he knew he'd have to ask her. If he didn't have a date for the dance, he'd have to go off with his family for the week end they had planned. Finally, he decided to phone her. After dialing the number and listening to three rings, he thought he'd better hang up. She and her family were probably eating supper. But then he heard the click. Betty answered. Furthermore, she accepted his invitation to the prom.

Jim rushed into the living room to tell his parents. "I've decided to go to the dance after all. I'm going with Betty Armstrong."



Why are some boys so fearful when it comes to asking a girl for a date?

Jim's mother looked very upset. "Jim," she said, "isn't that dance on the week end your father and I had planned we should all go to the country?"

Jim's face fell. "Couldn't we put it off? I do want to go to the dance. And I've asked Betty."

"It's all right, Jim. I'm just surprised that you forgot our week end." She still looked a little disappointed.

What's it all about?

If you look closely at this story, you will discover that in asking Betty to the dance, Jim may have been more afraid of disappointing his mother than of the possibility that Betty might not accept his invitation. You can see that both Jim and his mother had to readjust themselves to the fact that Jim was becoming an adult. He had grown up enough that he wanted to go to the dance and to take a girl he could be proud of.

Jim's mother had always been very attached to her only son. Sometimes parents don't realize how grown up their teen-agers have become, and they feel these boys and girls aren't ready to spend a lot of time away from the family. Fathers and mothers may be reluctant to have boys and girls grow up and leave them for other friends. Jim's mother felt this way. She thought Jim was too young to date, and she didn't want to share him with girl friends just yet or have him spend so much time away from home.

Though Jim had sensed this feeling, he didn't realize that it was one of the main reasons why he was so fearful about asking Betty to go to the spring formal. He told himself that he was frightened because Betty might not accept his invitation.

When Jim told his mother he was going to the dance with Betty, his mother became very upset. It was this sort of thing Jim was most afraid of. From past experiences he knew that every new step he made toward adulthood brought momentary disappointment to his mother. There was the time when he'd started to stay after school to play baseball instead of bringing the kids home with him. There was the time he'd gone off to Boy Scout camp. He wasn't really as worried about Betty's not accepting him as he was anxious because he had already learned that any new steps into adulthood brought momentary disappointment to his mother. We say that Jim "displaced" the anxiety he felt about disappointing his mother so that, instead, he worried about whether or not Betty would accept his invitation.

A related problem

One aspect of sex which causes many teen-agers a good deal of anxiety is masturbation. This is the practice of handling the sexual organs for the purpose of getting sexual satisfaction. It has been found that even small children masturbate. Between the age of about five and the time when their bodies mature, this practice diminishes or stops altogether. When sex feelings become more intense at the beginning of adolescence, some boys and girls begin to masturbate once more, and they may be very fearful and anxious about doing so.

Many boys and girls believe that masturbation causes pimples, that it will injure their sexual organs, or cause insanity. Others believe that, if they masturbate, they will be unable to make a successful adjustment in marriage. None of these things is true. They are myths that have developed through the ages.

In itself, masturbation is a form of exploration, an experimentation to find relief from sexual tension. In time, the practice subsides, and, eventually the young person finds more adequate methods of dealing with his sexual feelings.

Some boys and girls have picked up the untrue stories mentioned above from adults outside their families. Some may have heard them from their parents, since it is only very recently that anybody knew the truth about masturbation—that, in itself, it is harmless.

Many parents honestly believe masturbation is genuinely harmful and try to keep their small children from masturbating through punishment,

threats, or just showing they are displeased. When this sort of thing happens, little children may feel that, in addition to all the other awful things we've mentioned, they may lose their parents' love if they masturbate.

This same fear of punishment and evil happenings may return if a boy or girl resumes masturbating during the teen years. But the punishment doesn't come, and the expected evil happenings very seldom occur. If they do occur, they are not the result of masturbation. There is no physical harm in masturbation. The biggest hazard in masturbation lies in the anxiety a person may feel because of the possibility of displeasing his parents or some other adults who themselves have been brought up to believe that masturbation is evil and dangerous. Actually, masturbation is normal in early adolescence and will subside as a teen-ager becomes used to being grown-up.

Fears of the unfearful

We said in Chapter 1 that anxiety and fear were usually helpful feelings because they warned us about possible dangers. Here, as in the case of Geraldine in Chapter 2, anxiety is warning us that something is dangerous when this isn't really the case. Young people's anxieties about masturbation point up the idea that *anxiety is not helpful if what we have learned to feel anxious about is not really dangerous*. When we have learned to feel anxious about something which is quite safe, anxiety serves no function at all except to make us uncomfortable.

Jealousy, hostility, and competition

We've seen how our sex drives may cause us to feel anxiety. Our jealous, competitive, angry feelings can upset us, too—can make us anxious about our ability to get along with the other sex, to win a tennis match, or to pass a test.

We have already seen how angry and jealous little children become when they have to share the love of the parent of the other sex with the parent who belongs to the same sex they do. Little children almost always become jealous when they have to share love with someone else.

One of the hardest times boys and girls may have with their angry, jealous feelings is when they have to share both of their parents' love with a brother or sister. Small children depend upon their parents for everything they need—for food, care, and safety. And they want their parents' undivided love and attention. They become angry and frightened when brothers and sisters take some of that love and attention from them.

Brothers and sisters

When Susan was six, her mother brought a new baby home from the hospital. Susan didn't think the baby was a bit nice, and when her mother was out in the kitchen fixing the baby's bottle, Susan hit the baby because, she said, he cried too loud.

Of course, brothers and sisters can't be allowed to hurt each other, and often they are punished and scolded for trying to do so. In the process, little children are sometimes confused and feel that not only is it wrong to fight and hurt others, but the angry, jealous feelings which caused these actions are bad, too. They may even feel that by having such feelings they may lose their parents' love altogether.



Having to share love with a new baby may make little children angry.

You can see that under such circumstances, children might become anxious about feeling angry and even hide their "bad" feelings from themselves in order to make themselves feel the anger wasn't really there at all. But anger is really a natural human emotion which we can learn to use to our advantage.

I can beat him

Even after he has learned he must not hurt the brothers and sisters who take some of his parents' attention, a child may try to get the better of his brothers and sisters another way. Instead of fighting with them, he will sometimes compete with them for his parents' love. In other words, he will try to show his parents that he is more deserving of love than his brothers and sisters.

Thirteen-year-old Anne tries to do everything better than her sister who is fourteen and a half. She tries to make better grades than her sister. She tries to be more popular with their friends. She wishes she would grow taller than Ellen, and she tries to beat her sister in all kinds of games. She does not realize it, but she wants to be better than Ellen because she feels that her parents will then give her more love. She also feels that by beating Ellen she can get even with Ellen for having even a share of that love which she feels should be all hers.

But Anne is younger than Ellen, and for that very reason, she cannot always do as well as her sister. We will see later that sometimes when this occurs, boys and girls may come to feel that they can't do anything quite as well as other people because in the past they couldn't do better than their brothers and sisters.

Brotherly competition

On the other hand, the desire to show that they are better than their brothers or sisters, may cause older children to lead younger members of the family into activities which are not safe for very young children. Six-year-old Harry tried to get his younger brother to climb the tree which Harry could climb so easily. Harry's mother knew the smaller boy couldn't climb the tree, so she scolded Harry for trying to get his brother into a dangerous situation. As a result of this and many similar situations, Harry, now that he is older, feels anxious and guilty whenever he is put into a competitive situation—whether it's a tennis match or a debating contest.

Tests worry Harry more than anything else. He's a very bright boy, but every time there's a final exam, Harry is anxious about it days ahead of time.

You see, Harry wants very much to beat everyone in the class when it comes to getting good grades. This is left over from those days when he was trying to prove he was better and more deserving of love than his brother. But also left over from those days is the feeling that it's wrong to do better than others and to be happy at their expense. As a result, Harry is always torn (without realizing it) between his desire to make good grades and his feeling it is wrong to "win" over others. As a result of this conflict, he is not aware of, Harry is always anxious and upset about tests.

It may seem strange to you that Harry's conscience would tell him it was wrong to make good grades. It does seem peculiar until we remember more about consciences. You recall that consciences are the result of our taking into ourselves all the rules about good and bad that our parents

give us until at last our parents don't have to say "No, No," or "Stop that." We say it ourselves when we're tempted to do something we feel is wrong. Harry's conscience, (and yours, too) developed when he was very young—before he was old enough to see the differences between one situation and another. Have you ever known a little child who, having been bitten by one dog, comes to feel all dogs or even all four-legged, hairy animals are dangerous? Harry's conscience developed in the same way. He was too young to realize that, even though it was wrong to outdo someone (a brother) in one situation, it was not *always* wrong to compete with others. The rule that went into his conscience wasn't, "Don't compete with your brother if it means getting him into a dangerous situation." It was simply, "Don't compete."

This rule has gone right along to high school with Harry since, like most of us, he only obeys his conscience without questioning what it says. As a result, he is anxious and does poorly in school.

Joe—another case in point

Feelings about competition are the cause of Joe's anxiety, too. Joe isn't anxious about tests. He is anxious about dating. He's afraid to ask a girl to go out with him. He tells himself his troubles lie in his appearance. Joe notices that a lot of the other fellows—especially the popular ones—are a good bit taller than he is, and they don't have the same trouble he has with a baby face. How in the world can he ever expect a girl like Mary or Jane to go out and have a coke with him after school, Joe wonders.

If Joe weren't too upset about the whole thing to think it through, he would realize that growth is pretty much an individual matter. It's true that many of his friends are edging six feet and have lost their baby fat before he has. But his development is just a little slower than theirs, and when he starts to shoot up in height, he'll catch up in a big hurry.

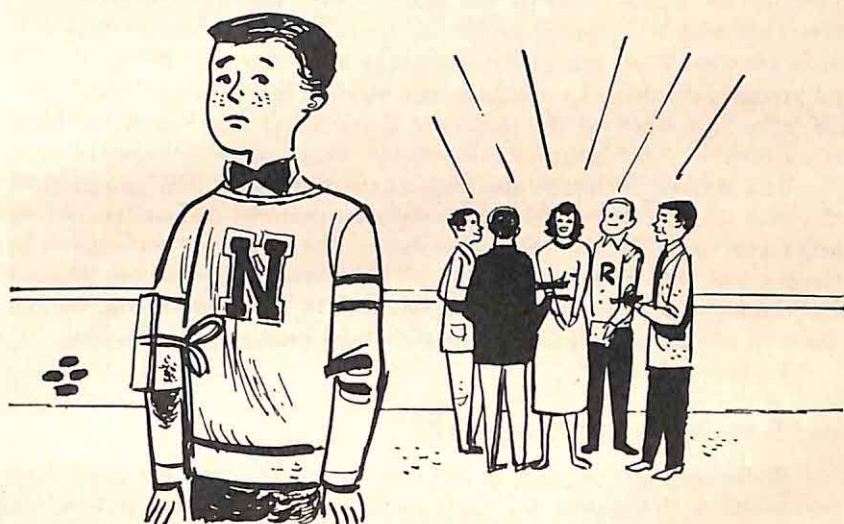
If Joe thought about it, he'd realize, too, that his present lack of size doesn't have to be the handicap he is making it. If he asked a girl to have a coke with him after school, he'd probably get a warm response. In fact, the girl might feel warmly complimented since she probably has doubts about herself, too.

Joe's worries about his size are just one sign of a bigger problem. What he really means when he says, "Girls won't go out with me because I'm too small," is "I'm not as good as the other fellows, and therefore I can't do as well as they when it comes to competition involved in getting dates."

Dates and competition

This may be the first time it's occurred to you that dating is a competitive affair. Looking at Joe's situation will help us to see this more clearly.

Until recently, the fellows have always been a team. They'd stick together and do things together. This gave Joe a great feeling of security. Now that he wants to go out with girls he must compete with his friends in getting dates. This dating business is a matter of individual action. Joe would have to go by himself and ask Mary to have a coke with him. The gang won't go up and ask her to have a coke. What's more—it may be that Harvey also would like to have a coke date with Jane. *Harvey has now become a potential rival to compete with, while formerly he was a buddy.*



Some teen-agers fear dating because it means they must compete with others.

Other things, too, make this a competitive situation. Joe wants Mary to like him, not only because he likes her, but also because it's important for Joe to have a girl in order to keep his place of prestige in the gang. When the fellows do get together now, they begin to brag about having taken some girl to the movie, having kissed her good night, and getting another date with her. Joe can't do this.

His troubles may stem from the fact that his older brother Jack has always been very popular with girls. Joe has always felt his older brother was superior. Joe now fears that, if he does try to go out with girls, he

will not be as successful as Jack in getting dates. He fears that unfavorable comparisons will be made, and, of course, he will be the first to make them. Joe actually is afraid of competing with his older brother.

Girls, too

Boys aren't the only ones who use a small flaw in their appearance to keep them out of what they feel would be unsuccessful competition with others. Marjorie has to wear braces on her teeth, and she tells herself that none of the fellows would ever pay any attention to her because of these braces. With this as her excuse, she doesn't even give the boys a chance to get to know her.

She tries never to laugh or smile so that her braces will go unnoticed. This makes a lot of the fellows think that she's a pretty sad case. They aren't concerned about her teeth, but they don't want a girl who's serious all the time. Marjorie hangs around with a group of girls and pretends she doesn't want to go out with the boys anyway. "At least," she feels, "I'm liked by the girls, and that's better than not being liked by anyone."

Because she is afraid she might not do well in the competition, Marjorie is using her teeth as an excuse to protect her from competing with other girls in the battle for dates. The cause of her difficulties is very like that found in Joe's case. But rather than look at the fact that she feels generally incapable of winning in this kind of competition, she pretends her anxiety is all a matter of the braces she has to wear.

Handling the competitive spirit

We've seen that because, as children, we were jealous and angry with our brothers and sisters for taking a share of our parents' love, we competed with them. In the process of this competition, some boys and girls have, without realizing it, come to feel that all competition is wrong. They often come to feel that they can't possibly win at any type of competition and will do almost anything to avoid getting into a situation where they might be defeated.

Boys and girls who have these feelings about competition will need to look at them and think about them carefully. For in high school, competition cannot be done away with. There is bound to be competition for dates, for parts in the school play, for positions on the school team. We need to retrain ourselves not to disapprove of this competition. In such competition, we must abide by the rules. We can't cheat in sports. We can't run down the characters of our rivals in dating. But

at the same time, we need to learn that competition is all right, that we can be competitive without being punished, and that we can be competitors with some chance of success.

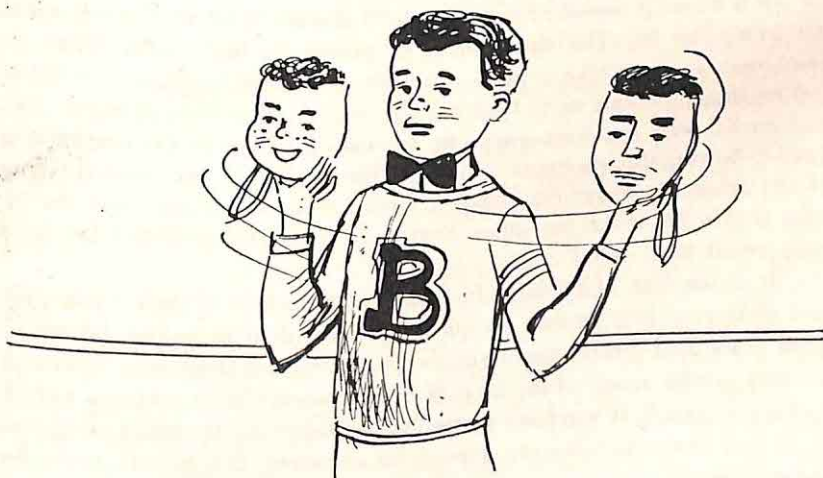
Child or adult?

We have talked about how sexual feelings and angry feelings can make us feel anxiety. Much of our anxiety, however, comes from our mixed feelings about growing up. We want to become adults, of course. We want to go out on our own, to test our strength, and show that we're people in our own right. But many teen-agers are apt to have some apprehensions about becoming adults, too. Being a child has many advantages.

It would be nice to remain protected and secure. Our families love us no matter what we do. They love us whether we're popular or not, whether we're successful or not. It's nice to be loved and protected without having to do anything to deserve it.

Besides, we haven't had an opportunity to test our strength, to know if we're capable of doing the things adults must do—earning a living, building a good marriage and a family, taking responsibility. Can we do it? Our reason says we can. But inside we may not be too sure. The future may seem uncertain to us. This uncertainty increases our longing for help—increases our desire to depend more on our parents.

All this results in a kind of seesaw. Sometimes you feel and act like an adult. Other times you wish very much to depend on your parents.



Teen-agers quickly shift between childlike and adult feelings and actions.

to let them make up your mind for you about what to do next. You want all the love and security that a little child gets just by being a little child. At times you may even act somewhat childish though you hate yourself for it later. This shuttling back and forth between childlike and adult feelings and behavior is normal for teen-agers. It's just a part of the time of life you are in.

You don't like to admit it

Still it's much more complimentary to tell yourself that you want very much to grow up to be an adult, than it is to admit that sometimes you don't want to do that at all. This is particularly true since the urge to stay children is sometimes pretty strong in teen-agers, and they may feel this is a pretty shameful state of affairs.

As a result, many young people aren't aware of the fact that their desires to remain children are the cause of a good many of their anxieties and problems.

Success may seem dangerous

There are many reasons why such things as taking a test may make us anxious. Perhaps we're anxious because we haven't prepared enough or simply because we don't know what the questions will be. And we've already seen how Harold's feelings about competitiveness made him feel anxiety when faced with a test. These aren't the only feelings which can unnerve us and make us anxious about succeeding at schoolwork and in other areas of our lives. Our desires to stay children can do this, too.

In a sense, it seems strange that tests should upset us if we've made fair grades so far. The situation looks pretty cut and dried. When we know that we must take a math exam the day after tomorrow, it seems that we should be able to sit back calmly, coolly judge from previous tests, and predict with some accuracy our success or failure in the one coming up. Of course, the questions will be different, but if our understanding of the subject is about the same, it would seem to indicate that the results should be about the same. But many boys and girls feel far from calm about tests. Why?

Is it the fear of failing? In part. But strangely enough, these boys and girls may fear success as much or more than they fear failure. A good grade and the success it stands for can be threatening to us though we may not be aware of the fact. If we are successful in taking a test, in making a speech at a school assembly, in sports, or in dating, it proves to us and others that we can depend on ourselves, that we are ready for independence.

This sounds good. But the part of us that would really like to remain childlike and dependent upon our parents for security and love may not like it at all. It's a little frightening to every teen-ager—whether he admits it or not—to think about facing the world, standing alone on his own two feet without Mom and Dad backing him up and taking final responsibility for how things turn out in his life. In fact, one of the most difficult problems teen-agers face in their development is that of accepting independence and giving up the child's privilege of depending upon others to make life turn out all right.

Success, then, may be threatening because it may mean you won't be permitted to depend so much upon your parents and that you may lose some of the security you found at home. You may feel, without realizing it, that if you do well in school or elsewhere your parents will think that you are quite adult and capable of meeting problems greater than you feel capable of meeting. Maybe they will send you off to college. Maybe they will no longer protect you. This feeling, although young people may not want to look at it, is quite common in high school students.

You are growing up to take an adult place in the world. You want to take that place, of course. But at same time, it means taking an awful lot of responsibility. You don't know if you can do it. The whole business is a little frightening. And home is warm and secure. You know you can get along fine there. Your parents love you no matter what.

Childishness and brothers and sisters

Sometimes teen-agers' fears of succeeding and desires to remain like little children are increased by the situation at home.

Helen won't admit it, but she is very jealous of her younger brother. In a portion of her mind that she hides even from herself, it's as if she said to herself, "If I do well in school, then I am more grown up and, therefore, need less of my parents' attention and love. Then they can give it all to Dick. But if I should not make such good grades then they will see that I, too, need this love and affection. They'll see I'm not really so grown-up after all. They'll have to love me instead of Dick."

Like the other teen-agers we've talked about, Helen is making a plea to hold onto the love and security she's had from her parents as a little child. But competition, which we've already discussed, is making her desire for this greater. If she keeps all of her parents' love, then Dick can't have it.

Mostly, however, we aren't conscious of feelings like these. We don't want to recognize them because it would hurt our self-esteem to know how jealous we are and how childlike and dependent we would really like to be.



Usually we go on to success despite the fact we may have anxious feelings.

Usually despite our anxiousness and our hidden feelings we go on to pass the test or to make a successful speech. A few boys and girls may be really kept from success by their feelings. In the next chapter we will discuss their problems and other similar difficulties which occur when fears and anxieties get out of hand.

You can't tell me what to do!

As we said earlier, our feelings about growing up and becoming independent are quite mixed. In part, the idea appeals to us. In part, we don't like it. Sometimes feelings about growing up cause difficulties in a completely different way than we've discussed so far.

Some boys and girls are so eager to prove that they are grown up and that their parents no longer have any authority to tell them what to do, that it causes all kinds of problems.

Suppose, for instance, your parents think that being successful in making a speech, running the hundred-yard dash, or holding a part-time job is very important. Just because you'd like to show your parents that it's your life and you don't have to do what they say, you may sometimes feel, without realizing it, that you'd like to lose the job or the race or like to make a very poor speech. This would mean you had gone against what your parents thought was right. It would show them they no longer had any authority over you.

Some young people are so eager to be free of their parents' wishes that they actually do wreck their job chances or lose a race for this rea-

son. Most don't follow through on these feelings but merely feel anxious whenever they're placed in a situation which tempts them to do exactly the opposite of what their families wish.

A few final words

In thinking about anxiety there are some things we need to remember. The first is that although many boys and girls may be anxious about one thing, the reasons for their anxiety may be very different. Tests may scare one person because of his fear of competition; another, because of his wish to remain a child; and another, because he hasn't studied.

But things are even more complex, for often you can't attribute anxious feelings to a single cause. Helen, you remember, worried about tests partly because a portion of her wanted to stay a child. But that wasn't all. She also wanted to keep her brother from getting any love.

Similarly a person might be anxious about dating because of his feelings about his sex drives, his belief that he couldn't compete successfully with other fellows, and his feelings that having a successful friendship with a member of the other sex might make people feel he was more grown up than he wanted to be.

The causes of anxiety vary from person to person, and there's seldom a one-sentence explanation of what is causing anxiety in any one case.

As a result it's sometimes hard for us to see why we are anxious about something. When we can't see what causes our anxiety feelings, it is easy for us to "displace" our anxiety and blame it on something which is not really the cause at all. But if we can see what we are doing, and what the real causes of our anxieties are, then we can see to it that anxiety does not hold us back. We may even make it help us. We will learn more about discovering the causes of our fears and anxieties and doing something about them in Chapter 5.

Anxiety as a challenge

Fear and anxiety serve as warnings of impending danger or of a problem to be faced. But that's not all. They act as challengers, too. Man has always faced difficulties, and he has progressed when he met the challenge of the difficulties confronting him. One of the basic functions of our minds is to surmount the problems and difficulties which life brings about. Both fear and anxiety tell us that we have a problem to face. At the same time, these feelings will stimulate us to greater efforts to solve the problem and master the difficulties we are facing. We are challenged to meet a problem and deal with it successfully.

WHEN FEAR AND ANXIETY RUN WILD

Every one of us has read of cases where a drowning person has resisted rescue. He will fight his rescuer and, in some cases, make it impossible for someone to help him. He is overcome with panic. Instead of relaxing and letting himself be taken to shore, he fights every attempt to help him. He is not thinking but, instead, acting on impulses blinded by sheer fright. He acts almost as a child might.

Another common example of fear getting the upper hand is the panic that occurs inside a crowded burning building. The people in the building will look for any way of escape. They will rush to their own doom by jumping out of high windows, or they will trample others underfoot. Here, again, extreme fear has momentarily paralyzed thinking ability.

Under the influence of extreme fear, people go back to childish ways of thinking and behaving. They act blindly, running around in circles or acting in other ways that do nothing to make their situation less dangerous. If, while everyone is panicked by the fire, one individual in the group can keep his head, and give directions, others will follow. Extreme fear pushes most people back to the helpless feelings of childhood, and they look for a person who will tell them what to do, just as a parent tells a child what to do in a case of emergency.

We saw earlier that fear is normally a helpful alarm signal, but when fear reached a point where it causes panic, it is no longer helpful. In fact, it often causes such unwise and childlike behavior in the person who feels it, that extreme fear does a good deal of harm.

It's the same way with anxiety

Just as extreme fear can do an individual a good deal of harm, so can extreme anxiety. All of us have our anxious moments, but some

people have far more trouble with anxiety than most of us do. Their anxieties about their hidden impulses—their hidden sexual or competitive feelings, for instance, or their desires to stay dependent upon their parents—are so great that these anxieties interfere seriously with their ability to lead satisfying, active, grown-up lives.

To make things worse, the process of trying to discover what causes these anxious feelings makes these extremely anxious people so tense and upset that they are almost beaten before they start.

With the help of experts—a list of these appears on page 44—such troubled people can learn what's causing their problems and can discover better ways of handling them. But without help, these troubled people are apt to continue leading lives that are made very difficult by their extreme anxieties which don't allow them to live comfortably.

Why does it happen?

Why does this occur? Why do some people feel so much more anxiety about their impulses than others?

For one thing, it's likely that many of the people who feel extremely anxious about their impulses had experiences in childhood which made them believe these impulses were far more dangerous and evil than most of us ever felt they were. For instance when, as little children, these boys and girls acted upon such impulses, they may have been severely punished. Or, perhaps, something very frightening happened just about the same time. One little boy's father became seriously ill a few hours after the boy had been angry with him and had thrown a temper tantrum. As a result, the little boy came to feel that his anger had caused his father's sickness and that all his angry feelings were extremely dangerous.

Sometimes boys and girls come to feel their impulses are very, very evil simply because the adults most important to them have felt this was the case.

Another reason

Often another factor plays a part in making these people very anxious about their feelings. Due to childhood experience, these feelings may be stronger than those of most of us.

To look at one example, a baby or small child may not, for one reason or another, receive the kind of love and care a young child needs. Because his need for this kind of love and care was not satisfied in the right way when he was very young, the person may continue to desire

these things very strongly even after he is much older—after most people his age have outgrown this need to be loved and cared for as a small child is.

But no matter how strong such desires are, teen-agers know they are supposed to be increasingly self-reliant. This makes it hard for the teenager who has such a tremendous need to remain loved and cared for to fulfill this need and may make him feel that this need is very bad. This makes him painfully anxious. Even if he hides from himself this very strong desire to remain childlike and cared for, it continues to be very much alive and to create extremely anxious feelings inside him.

Anxiety in disguise

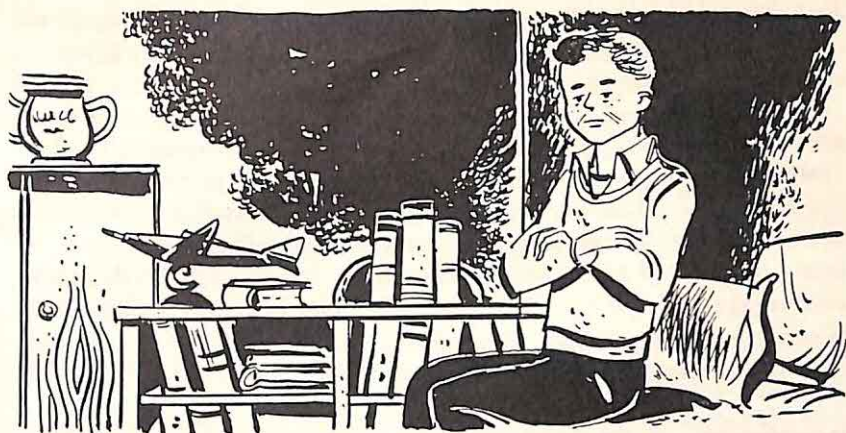
When anxieties become very strong, they may wear disguises so that it's very difficult to recognize what lies beneath them. In fact, the person's problems may seem completely unrelated to the thing that is really making him anxious. In the next few pages let's see how these disguises might work.

Withdrawal

Shortly after Clarence entered high school, he began taking less and less part in activities with people his own age. He spent most of his time in his room, studying, daydreaming, and listening to records. Everyone wants to be alone now and then, but Clarence carried this behavior to an extreme. Clarence stayed at home in his room, day after day, week after week, and this went on for a period of more than six months. Except during school hours, he saw only his father and mother and often avoided having anything to do with them.

Clarence didn't *seem* to feel frightened by anything, but his withdrawal from the give-and-take of everyday life was an effort to handle anxiety caused by his extremely strong need to keep, even when he grew older, the kind of love and care usually reserved for much smaller children. This strong need (which Clarence couldn't have put into words) always made him feel somewhat tense and upset. Trying to get along with others in a grown-up way increased Clarence's anxiety and tension greatly because becoming an adult would mean his childlike desires could not be satisfied. Clarence's situation was complicated by the fact that he was also very anxious about his sexual feelings.

By withdrawing so completely from the things adults and other young people were doing, Clarence avoided taking part in activities which would have shown himself and others that he was becoming more grown up. He



A few teen-agers become so anxious that they withdraw from everyday life.

also was able to keep out of situations in which he would be around girls. Then, too, his withdrawal into his home helped to satisfy a little his deep desire to keep the love and care usually given at home to younger children.

You can see that Clarence's feelings and anxieties are different from yours in their strength. You can also see that Clarence's action in hiding away in his room is extreme in that he spends almost all of his time in this way—in fact he does almost nothing else.

Clarence's behavior is not like most of ours, but his case is far from hopeless. With the help of experts—whose work is discussed at the end of the next chapter—Clarence can outgrow his extremely strong need to remain dependent upon his family.

Failure

Until she was in tenth grade, Martha was a very good student. Then, suddenly her grades dropped from B's to F's. She found she could not get anything from her studying at all, and she constantly forgot everything she knew when confronted with a test or asked a question by the teacher. Things have gone on like this for many, many months. Martha tries to study, but it just doesn't do any good.

Martha, too, has an extremely strong need to keep her relationship to her father and mother on a very childlike basis. Her need, her anxiety that it will not be satisfied, and her feeling that it is evil for her to want so much to depend on her family are all far stronger than the feelings that most of us experience. Despite their strength, Martha is unaware of these feelings and the fact that they are causing her to fail in school. How-

ever, this is the case. If she shows she cannot even be successful at the teen-age job of being a high school student, no one will expect her to do even more adult things. At least that's how the hidden part of her mind reasons. Instead, her family and friends will, she hopes, treat her and love her in the same way they would treat and love a small child. Like Clarence, Martha also will need special help with her problems.

Success in school life and social life frightens us all at times, but it can be especially threatening to an individual who is still a child as far as his feelings are concerned. Success means greater adulthood, greater achievement on one's own. That's the last thing wanted by a person who is emotionally still a child. Although his body and mind are grown up, he still has a very real need to be treated like a child.

It makes them sick

Some teen-agers who feel this extreme need to be loved and cared for like small children actually become physically ill in order to escape the prospect of leaving their parents' protection and to escape the anxiety they feel at the thought of becoming adults.

Although asthma is frequently caused by allergies, some teen-agers



Extreme anxiety may cause teen-agers to be sick without physical cause.

develop asthma for which the doctors can discover no physical reason. But even so, the asthma is very real and the individual suffers greatly from it.

In an instance like this, the cause of the sickness may lie in the person's extreme need for protective love and attention. He doesn't realize it, but a boy (or girl) with asthma from an emotional cause has learned that, when he is sick, he receives the kind of protective attention from his family that only a much younger child would normally get. By be-

coming ill, he can hang onto his way of depending upon his parents for everything. But such a person isn't aware that this is causing his sickness. And he isn't just pretending to be sick. He really is ill and really is suffering. He needs a doctor's help as much as any other sick person.

So far, we've discussed the harmful ways of behaving that can result from extremely strong desires to continue to depend upon parents in a childlike way and from the extreme anxiety which is likely to go along with these desires. Extreme anxiety about jealousy and anger also can get out of hand.

I'm afraid I'll get sick

Like other emotions, feelings of anger and jealousy may become very strong in some people. And they are likely to create a great deal of guilt and anxiety. A person may hide these feelings from himself because he has been taught that it is wrong to be jealous or angry. But these feelings may take on disguised forms and continue to affect his life.

Marvin was always worried that he might become seriously ill or die. Actually he really was so angry and jealous of his sister that, though he wouldn't admit it, he wished *she* would die. These feelings about his sister made him feel very guilty, and he could not face them in himself. So they became hidden and changed into an extreme fear about his own health and welfare. Because he felt very guilty, his conscience demanded the kind of punishment which says, "If I want my sister to suffer, then I deserve the same suffering."

In other cases, hidden angry feelings cause a person to develop great fears concerning the health of the person he is angry with or jealous of. In this way, he protects both himself and the other person from the results of the bad things he feels his anger might lead to.

It is important to point out that all this is a question of degree. All of us have been jealous and angry at some time in our lives, and all of us have been concerned over our health or the health of another person. But an exaggerated concern is a different thing. If constant worry keeps on even when there is no reasonable reason to worry, it may be a sign that the worrying person is suffering from extreme anxiety about hidden angry feelings.

Moodiness

Anxiety about strong hidden feelings of anger also causes some teenagers to feel very depressed—so depressed, in fact, they feel they might just as well be dead. The held-in, hidden anger disguises itself and turns

back on the angry person, making him miserable instead of causing misery to the person the anger was originally aimed at. This not only gives the angry impulse some expression, but gives the conscience a chance to punish the person for having the strong angry feeling which the individual feels are bad.

Teen-agers are people living through a period in which their emotions are definitely subject to great ups and downs. They are not only growing physically but emotionally as well. This growing up period is often a stormy one. Everyone has moods, but if a person finds himself very deeply depressed for a period of months, he needs some expert assistance in understanding why he is depressed and in working out ways to handle the feelings causing his depression.

Blaming others

There are other harmful ways of behaving which are caused by strong angry feelings and anxieties about these feelings. The girl who is constantly accusing others of talking behind her back may really feel very angry with others and wish she could say bad things about them. But she hides this from herself and believes, instead, that they speak badly about her. In this way, she avoids the guilt she would feel if she admitted she was so angry with others. Instead, she can accuse others of being angry.

In summary

We have seen that some people suffer from anxieties which are very extreme. Even though extreme anxieties sometimes cause people to react in ways which are harmful to them and difficult to understand, we have found that the main difference between these harmful anxious feelings and those anxious feelings which are helpful seems to lie in the strength of the impulses causing the anxiety, the guilt the person feels about these impulses, and the strength of the anxiety itself.

Even though an individual is extremely anxious about his impulses and, as a result, acts in ways which do him more harm than good, he can be helped to lead a happier life. The experts listed on page 44, have special training in helping even the most troubled people learn to deal with their anxieties and their strong feelings.

Most of us will not need this kind of help. As we will see in the next chapter, most teen-agers can handle their biggest fears and anxieties by themselves or with the aid of helpful adults.

HOW TO HANDLE FEAR AND ANXIETY

There's a churning feeling in your stomach. The palms of your hands may be perspiring. There's tension at the back of your neck, and maybe your head aches a little. Perhaps your hands and knees are shaking.

These are the physical symptoms of fear and anxiety. They're pretty uncomfortable. Sometimes we have these symptoms of fear and anxiety without being able to lay our finger on the cause. We are afraid without knowing exactly why.

When you're frightened without knowing the real reason behind your fear, it's a little like having a toothache. You can try to forget about the feeling, and it will probably get worse, or you can admit your discomfort and then do something about it.

The similarity between fear and a toothache does not stop there. The causes of both these pains are often difficult to locate exactly. Often when we go to the dentist, we try to tell him where it hurts, but we can only point to a general area of two or three teeth where we feel pain. The causes of our anxieties are often hard to locate, too. We just feel generally anxious and upset without being able to see exactly why this should be or what's causing our anxiety.

The first step in lessening our fears and anxieties is to find out what hurts. If you sit down and try to figure out why you are afraid, you will find that the closer you come to the reason, the greater your fear may become. This can often act as a road marker for us. If we follow the sign of increased fear, we may come to the source of our trouble.

Discuss your fears with someone

But thinking clearly when this very thinking is increasing our fear is hard to do. It's like trying to remove a splinter. The process of trying

to get the sliver out may hurt badly enough that you'll stop just before you manage to pry loose the cause of your troubles.

Finding what's causing you to be afraid is sometimes easier when you go about it by talking with someone else. When we actually talk about a problem, it begins to take shape. Also, sharing our fears through talking about them with someone else often helps lessen them enough so that it's easier to dig down to their roots. In addition, the other person may help us to stay on the track even when it's frightening or a little painful to do so.

Yes, talking to someone else is a good way for us to discover what we are afraid of. But most of us wouldn't want to discuss our strongest fears and anxieties with people our own age. They're likely to have problems similar to our own and are not likely to see the cause too clearly either.

We most often feel that an adult who is not personally involved in the problem we are facing is the easiest person to talk to. He also can see the problem more clearly.

You may feel that one of your parents could be the most sympathetic and helpful listener. Or, if you sense that your anxiety may be related to your feelings about your mother or father, then you may want to talk with some other adult—perhaps an understanding teacher, your minister, rabbi, or priest, or perhaps, a family friend. Any one of these people might make a good listener, particularly if he or she is not personally involved in your problem or a problem of his or her own similar to yours. When people aren't personally involved, they can see your problem more clearly and help you to discover its cause.

Once you've discovered why you are afraid, half the battle is over. Generally when you know the cause of your fear, the next step to be taken becomes clear.



Talking to an understanding adult helps to locate causes of fear.

What to do about fear and anxiety

By studying Jane's story you can see how talking with someone might help you to discover the source of your anxiety, and you can also learn a three-step method that may help you in dealing with your own fears.

Jane was terribly afraid of going swimming. This problem hadn't caused her any great concern because the opportunity for going swimming had been rather small. But one summer Jane was asked to join a party that was going to the beach for the day. She definitely wanted to go. Some of her very close friends were going to be at the party, too. Jane accepted the invitation, but not without a certain amount of fear and dread because she knew she would be expected to go into the water.

Why Jane was afraid

The evening before the party, Jane discussed her fears with her mother. Jane's mother helped Jane to understand that her fear had a very understandable reason behind it. When Jane was four years old, she and her family had spent a vacation at the seashore. One day while she was playing in the shallow water, a very big wave had come along and thrown her down. Along with swallowing a lot of salt water and getting scratched up on the sandy bottom, Jane had become very frightened. She had refused to play in the water, and her family had not felt like making an issue of it because they knew they had to go home in a few days.

Since that time Jane had had only one or two opportunities to go in swimming, and each time she managed not to go. Jane's mother tried to show her that her original experience with swimming had unfortunately been unpleasant. In addition, she had not had a chance to change this original impression.

Jane could understand this very well. By talking to her mother she discovered why she was afraid.

Gaining confidence

The next day at the beach Jane stayed where the water was shallow and splashed about. Slowly she gained confidence. She played with her friends, and little by little her fear diminished. After a while, she was asking some of her friends to show her how to swim. Of course, she kept in shallow water, but this was wise anyway since she was just learning. Jane almost forgot about being afraid because she was not thinking about herself and how scared she was, but was laughing and joking with her friends.

Three steps which help overcome fear

Jane had followed three steps which are very useful in trying to handle fear. *First, she had discovered why she was afraid of swimming.*

Talking with her mother had helped her see the cause of her problem. She had been able to remove some of her fear just by getting the thing out into the open. *Second, Jane had then faced the problem.* Even though she was afraid of getting in the water she went to the beach. *Third, she put up a goal for herself and tried to achieve it.* The goal was getting into the water. This goal was one which she could attain. If she had said to herself, "Afraid or not, I'll go off the ten-foot diving board," she would have put up a goal that, in all probability, she would not have been able to reach. Or if she had tried the dive, it might not have been an entirely pleasant experience. She would have invited failure. Failure would then, in turn, increase her original fear of swimming.

But instead, Jane gave herself a reasonable goal—one that, with reasonable effort on her part, she could reach. Instead of inviting failure, she invited and worked for success. As a result, Jane learned that she could do something which she was previously afraid of and believed she could never do.

You are not unique

"Jane's fears weren't hard to conquer," you say. "But mine, well, they're much worse. There's no one I can talk to who knows what started them at first, and even if you did find out the cause behind them, it wouldn't do any good. I'd still be afraid."



One girl who was afraid of swimming set up a goal of going into the water.

It's easy to fall into the trap of thinking your particular situation is the most difficult one that ever existed. You feel the fear, and you are convinced that no one ever faced such a serious problem as yours.

It's dollars to doughnuts that you're not so unusual in the problems and fears you have. It's amazing how similar different people's fears are.

Another example

Bob thought his problem was impossible. Bob was always afraid that he wasn't going to be liked as well as other people. He felt the fellows he ran around with would only admire and respect him if he made the school's first basketball team. But Bob, like many other fellows, lacked the coordination necessary to be a top-notch basketball player.

He tried hard to develop his skill at basketball, but do what he might, he could not become more than a substitute. As a result, he came to be even more afraid that no one could possibly feel he was as worth-while as the fellows who were on the first team. He began to feel that neither he nor anyone else could solve his problem.

Every time practice came around, Bob grew more and more unco-operative. He argued with everyone. He picked fights with smaller boys and once even beat a couple of them up on the way home after school. This, of course, made Bob less popular with the other boys instead of more so. They felt he was being a bad sport.

Bob didn't want to be a bad sport, but he couldn't see what to do. He couldn't get admiration for himself by being better than others on the basketball court. So he tried to show he was better than *someone* by beating up on the younger boys. Bob grew to feel more and more anxious because the worse he acted, the less popular he became, and that made it more and more important for him to show he was better than the others and worth their admiration.

Bob gets help

One day, Bob went to the coach to discuss his problem. The two of them sat down in the coach's office, and Bob told how badly he wanted to succeed at sports, how hard he had tried, and how completely unhappy he was about not being able to be a star or at least to make first team. Then, with the help of a few kindly questions from the coach, Bob went on to discuss how badly he wanted to be liked and admired and how this tied in with his desire to be tops in sports.

As he talked to the coach, he gradually saw that one reason he wanted admiration so badly—and one reason success was so important to him—

was that he had always felt his older brother was more likeable than he was. By constantly trying to be successful and admired, he was attempting to prove this wasn't so. With the coach's help, Bob began to see, that because Bob was a different person, he couldn't judge himself by the same standards he used to judge his brother. The coach pointed out that Bob, too, had some worth-while traits—that he was good in shop and English and speech classes and knew more about automobile engines than anyone else in school.

The coach also helped Bob to see something important about sports which Bob had overlooked. The sports that Bob tried to excel in were based on teamwork. This meant that you had to work with others rather than desperately try to be the whole show. Trying to be the "star" was going at the problem the wrong way. The coach got Bob to see that in sports, at least, his competitive desire to be better than others should be directed against the other team rather than against the members of his own team. Bob began to realize that even if he were only a substitute, he could be a real asset to the team and a desired member if he would work hard at doing his small share in making that team work well. Among his team mates he could gain more friends by being helpful and pleasant than by constantly trying to show how much better he was than they were.

Learning where we can be tops

Then, too, the coach helped Bob to realize that some boys are just naturally better than others when it comes to athletic ability. He tried to help Bob see that there was no shame in not being able to be the best in sports. Training can do a lot, but even with training, not everyone can become a forward on the all-star team. The coach tried to show Bob by his own example, that one can't be a champion at everything. He, for instance, had always had a terribly hard time making speeches. Others obviously had an easier time of it.

With the coach's aid, Bob gradually saw that even if he couldn't be best in sports, he might be outstanding in something else. Bob's chance to try to be tops in a new field came soon. A new school play was being cast, and remembering his success in English and speech classes, Bob tried out for a part. He was given a major role. He noticed that a couple of the best athletes tried out, too, but didn't receive a part or else received less important ones.

Bob was a hit in the play, and his success helped to build up his self-confidence. He learned that *a person is most likely to be successful if he tackles problems in those fields where he has some ability and doesn't ask more of himself than his ability will allow him to accomplish.*



A boy who is poor in sports may be the star of the school play.

Truly grown-up people are realistic enough to take into account both their weaknesses and strengths. Then they can put the emphasis upon those areas of their personalities where they are strongest.

Learning from Bob

What can we learn from Bob's story? Bob had anxious feelings about himself. Because he did not sit back, look at his fears, and try to discover what caused them, he at first got into trouble, tried to solve his problems by setting up a goal he couldn't attain, and grew more and more unhappy.

When he really did begin to try to find the cause of his fears and a way to handle them, he followed, with the coach's help, almost the same method Jane followed, and, as a result, he was more successful.

He discovered the causes of his fears. He realized that he felt he wasn't as likeable as his brother and this was the original cause of his anxiety. He discovered, too, that in trying to prove his worth he hadn't taken into account his own strengths and weaknesses. This, he found, caused him to fail, and made him more anxious about himself.

He faced the causes of his fears and tried to think about them realistically. He saw that he, as well as his brother, had some worth-while traits. He saw, too, that though he hadn't been successful in achieving the goals he'd set for himself, he *could* be successful if he set up more realistic goals.

He set up new goals that took into account his strengths and weaknesses and followed through on them. He found something he could be really tops in and became very successful in that. In athletics, he lowered his goals and was willing to take a helpful part without trying to be a star.

We can usually handle our fears

By ourselves or with the help of adult friends, most of us can discover the causes of our fears and learn to handle our lives so that we are less fearful. Now and then, however, boys and girls and men and women

have a more difficult time with fears and anxieties and need special help in learning to deal with the things making them afraid.

People who can help

Today, there are experts who are trained to help people understand their emotional problems (problems about feelings and the anxiety these feelings produce). When we cannot solve our own emotional problems by the direct, three-step method, it is wise to seek expert attention before these problems grow larger. An extreme amount of anxiety or unhappiness is a symptom just as running a fever is a symptom. It is best to do something about it.

Once boys and girls have decided that they need special help there are several people whom they can consult about their problems. If you feel you need special help, to whom can you turn?

- 1) **The school psychologist or guidance counselor** may be able to help you work out your difficulty or direct you to someone who can help you.
- 2) **Your minister, rabbi, or priest** has often helped people out of emotional difficulties. His vast experience often can be relied on to give you some help in meeting your problems.
- 3) **The family doctor** is often a good source of aid. He knows your family and you and so can shed light on some of your problems.
- 4) **A social worker** may be consulted. He or she has been trained in college and graduate school for this type of work. Sometimes the social worker may feel that he or she is not the person to help you and will put you in touch with someone else who can.
- 5) **The psychiatrist** is a medical doctor whose specialty is helping people with their emotional problems. He is a doctor who has specialized just as surgeon has. If you need a tonsillectomy then you go to a surgeon, and if you have an emotional difficulty then you go to a psychiatrist.

All these people have had training or experience in helping solve emotional problems. They can help you find relief from emotional pains, just as the family doctor helps you get relief from physical pains.



CAN WE ESCAPE FEAR ALTOGETHER?

We've seen that too much fear and anxiety cause real trouble. Does this mean that fear and anxiety, in and of themselves, are bad—that we should try to do away with them altogether? Even if we wanted to, would it be possible for us to do away with fear and anxiety completely? The late President Roosevelt included freedom from fear as one of the goals he was trying to win for the world. Was he being realistic?

All of us do need to feel that we are pretty capable of dealing with most of the situations life places us in. And we need to feel that the world is not a completely impossible place to live in. We need to be sufficiently free from fear that we can satisfy our basic needs—not only our needs for things which keep us alive—but our needs for such things as love, achievement, and a sense of belonging. We need to be able to fill these needs without being hampered by large amounts of fear and anxiety. In other words, we need a certain amount of what experts on human behavior call *security*.

But the truth of the matter is that, try as we will, we will never be completely secure. We will never be completely free from fears and anxieties. And even if we could be completely free of them, it would not be a good thing.

Why can't we do away with fear and anxiety? There's a good reason.

A changing world

As long as you continue to breathe, you and the world around you will change. For life is *dynamic*. It does not stand still.

As long as you change and are a part of this changing world, you are bound to feel a certain amount of fear, anxiety, and insecurity. Change brings about new situations, and every time you face a new situation,

you are apt to feel somewhat anxious. This is because you are never sure you can cope with a new situation until you actually try.

For instance, no matter how many years you have spent in school, no matter the quantities of examinations you have passed, no matter how well you have studied for the exam coming up, you will still feel a certain amount of anxious uneasiness until you see what the questions are and know that you can answer most of them. Each exam is a new situation in which you must once again prove yourself. Famous actors who have spent years on the stage still admit that they have stage fright before each performance. They, too, are put to a new test every time the curtain goes up. And they react to it by feeling anxious.

Often we look back on some situation which has caused us to be fearful and which is now over and wonder why in the world we were afraid. Fear is completely absent when you look at the situation after you've met it successfully. But only after we've succeeded in a new situation can we feel secure and comfortable about it.

It's a good thing

The feelings of insecurity, fear, and anxiety which we all feel when confronted with a new situation actually have a beneficial effect. You recall that we learned in Chapter 1 how fear and anxiety prepared our bodies to meet new and emergency situations. In this way, they stimulate us to do our best work. We are alert. Our bodies have been made ready to meet the challenge. In fact, we might say we were in a state of excitement. A touch of fear actually seems to make a situation more exciting, as well as helping us meet a challenge. And each new challenge we meet successfully makes us more confident in facing other new situations.

Only by facing new situations do we grow. Life does not stand still for us. Each new day holds the magic of undiscovered roads lying before us. We have never lived this day before, and new challenges await us. Life consists of constant changes, new situations, ever new challenges for us to try ourselves on. There's bound to be a certain amount of fear and anxiety connected with this kind of living. But it's a life that's exciting and challenging. A life that could be lived with complete freedom from fear would be a life in which you never took a chance, in which you never reached out for new things or moved forward.

Adults need challenge

As we said earlier in facing life and new situations, each of us does need a basic sureness about ourselves and the world around us. We need

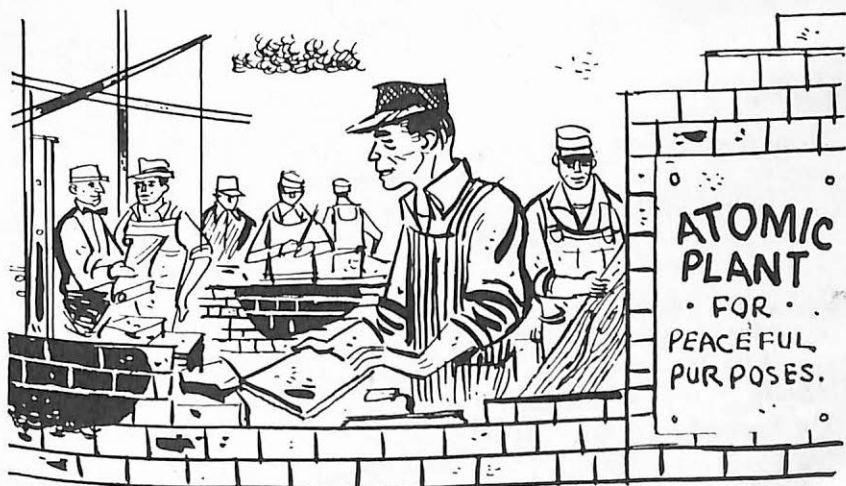
a certain amount of security. But we must also have in our lives a degree of challenge and the inevitable insecurity this brings with it.

This is particularly true as we become more grown up. A baby needs the security and protection his parents give him so that he can use all his own energies for growing up. But once a person has become full grown, he does not need his parents' protection, and he has more energy than he can use in the process of just existing. This supply of energy he formerly used for growing must now be put to some other use. He may use this extra energy in his occupational and social life. This energy gives most adults a real urge to meet the challenge in new situations, to overcome obstacles which they face. There's a joy and excitement in overcoming these obstacles. If the adult feels fear, it only adds spice to living and causes the truly grown-up person to work even harder at meeting the new situations before him.

Anxiety and fear help

Right now the whole world is faced with a new situation which is causing us anxiety. For the first time we are able to use atomic energy. If we use it for peaceful purposes, we will progress, and the whole world will live better than ever before. If we use it for warfare, we may all die. Here is a situation with possibilities for great good and great evil.

Like it or not, we are faced with the challenge of handling this new situation so it will benefit all of us. The fact that we feel fear may stimu-



Our fears about atomic energy may help us to use it wisely and carefully.

late us to meet the challenge better by bringing all our energies into play in making wise and careful decisions about atomic energy.

Fear in the world today

Sometimes the present world situation makes us behave timidly because the problems seem too great. Today, we are made to feel very insecure by the threat of another war, and by the battle between communistic and democratic ideas. These things may be making young people's approach to life more timid than it was in the past. In 1951 *TIME* magazine* wrote that "Youth's ambitions have shrunk. Few youngsters today want to mine diamonds in South Africa, ranch in Paraguay, climb Mount Everest, find a cure for cancer, sail around the world, or build an industrial empire. Some would like to own a small, independent business, but most want a good job with a big firm, and with it, a kind of suburban idyll."

It is good to recognize the dangers that exist in the world situation. But we must be careful that in our attempt to escape from our fears about today's world, we do not seek, as certain other nations have sought, the false security offered by an ultra-strong leader and an ultra-strong government. This would mean we had bought an artificial security at the price of our freedom.

In world affairs, as in everything else, it's best to face the cause of our fears and to accept the challenge of living in a difficult world.

The golden mean

We have seen that, although we all need a certain amount of security, we can never reach a point where there is no fear and anxiety in our lives. We have seen, too, that if it were possible to reach this point, we would miss much of the challenge, the zest, the chance to develop through meeting new situations which life now offers us.

To lead full lives, we need a certain amount of security and a certain amount of fear and anxiety. Ideally there is a golden mean—a point where we have the scales of security and insecurity in balance. It is at this point that we can carry on our lives with greatest productivity and happiness. However, this balance will be upset at times.

Whenever we are faced with fear or anxiety, our question should not be, "How can I escape fear?" but rather, "How can I master fear?" To master fear is to make use of it. Instead of becoming panicked, we can use fear to help stimulate ourselves to greater activity.

*"The Younger Generation," *Time* magazine, November 5, 1951, p. 46.

SRA Guidance Series

..... to help young people solve the problems of everyday living

MY HOME AND FAMILY

Getting Along with Brothers and Sisters
How to Live with Parents

MY SCHOOL

How to Take a Test
Improving Your Learning Ability
Making the Most of Your Intelligence
Streamline Your Reading
Study Your Way Through School
What Good Is High School?
What Good Is Math?
Why Stay in School?

HEALTH

You and Your Health
Your Safety Manual

THINGS IN GENERAL

Enjoying Leisure Time
Facts About Alcohol
Facts About Juvenile Delinquency
Facts About Narcotics
How to Be a Better Speaker
What You Should Know About
Communism

LOOKING AHEAD

Baby-Sitters' Handbook
Choosing Your Career
Discovering Your Real Interests
Getting Job Experience
How to Get THE Job
Our World of Work
School Subjects and Jobs
Should You Go to College?
Understanding Our Economy
What Employers Want
You and the Draft
You and Your Mental Abilities
Your Personality and Your Job

GETTING ALONG WITH OTHERS

Getting Along with Others
Guide to Good Leadership
Growing Up Socially
Let's Talk
Making and Keeping Friends
Where Are Your Manners?

BOY MEETS GIRL

Dating Days
Looking Ahead to Marriage
Understanding Sex
Understanding the Other Sex

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO
UNDERSTAND YOURSELF
MORE FULLY?**

Order these SRA Guidance Series Booklets now.

**BUILDING YOUR PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE
EXPLORING YOUR PERSONALITY
GUIDE TO GOOD GROOMING
A GUIDE TO LOGICAL THINKING
HOW TO INCREASE YOUR SELF-CONFIDENCE
HOW TO SOLVE YOUR PROBLEMS
UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF
WHAT ARE YOUR PROBLEMS?
WHAT IS HONESTY?
WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW
ABOUT SOCIAL CLASS
YOUR BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS
YOUR HEREDITY**

*For titles of more SRA Guidance Series Booklets
see inside back cover.*

Simply send your order to

**SCIENCE RESEARCH ASSOCIATES, INC.
57 West Grand Avenue, Chicago 10, Ill.**